

## READER'S DIGEST RANKS AMERICA'S CLEANEST BIG CITIES

*Portland, Oregon named Cleanest City in America*

PLEASANTVILLE, NY (June 15, 2005) - After a rigorous review of environmental data, *Reader's Digest* issues its first ranking of America's Cleanest Cities in the July issue, on newsstands June 21. Based on five measures of cleanliness -- air pollution, water pollution, toxic emissions, hazardous waste and the number of sanitation workers per capita -- the 50 most populous Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in the country were scored. (The MSA includes cities and surrounding suburbs and counties.)

According to *Reader's Digest*, the five cleanest cities are: 1) Portland, OR 2) San Jose, CA 3) Buffalo, NY 4) Columbus, OH 5) San Francisco, CA. The complete list of America's Cleanest Cities is available at [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com) <<http://www.rd.com>>.

"There were a lot of surprises at the top of the list because some cities would have been at the bottom just a few years ago," said *Reader's Digest's* Editor-in-Chief Jackie Leo. "It's clear that change is possible when you dedicate the time and resources to turn a town around."

- Portland addressed its ancient sewage system by investing over one billion dollars in the "Big Pipe Project" and it established a growth boundary around its urban center to balance development with open space and farmland.
- San Jose benefited from a strong grassroots environmental movement that pressured industry to clean up its mess. The Santa Clara Valley water district went from having serious ground water contamination to being a leader in testing and protecting drinking water.
- Buffalo has made great strides in containing and cleaning up brownfields and contaminated sites - residue of its industrial past. Its river cleanup has been successful enough to draw boaters and fishermen back to the waterway.
- Columbus placed a moratorium on development of sensitive watershed land and it has committed to removing new graffiti within two days of its appearance.
- San Francisco enjoys a citizenry that is environmentally conscious and a proactive Environment Department. Its high emissions have been reduced as a result of the state's air-quality regulations and a public transit system that leads the way with clean air vehicles.

Methodology:

*Reader's Digest's* team of reporters analyzed data from the Environmental Protection Agency (for 2002-03) and information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Metro areas

earned points on a scale from 1 to 50 in each category (1 being the lowest) reflecting how they performed relative to the other areas. Each measure was weighted in terms of its threat to public health. Water and air, for example, received twice the weight of sanitation. Final scores were an average of all points scored for each city.

*Reader's Digest* reaches about 100 million readers worldwide each month. The magazine celebrates ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and delivers a compelling mix of humor, personal service and other human-interest stories. *Reader's Digest* is published in 19 languages and 48 editions worldwide.